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# Chinese New Year



## The Story of the Great Race



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Long ago, in China, the Jade Emperor thought he needed to find a way of keeping track of each year so he decided to make a zodiac.

He thought he should name every year after a different animal.

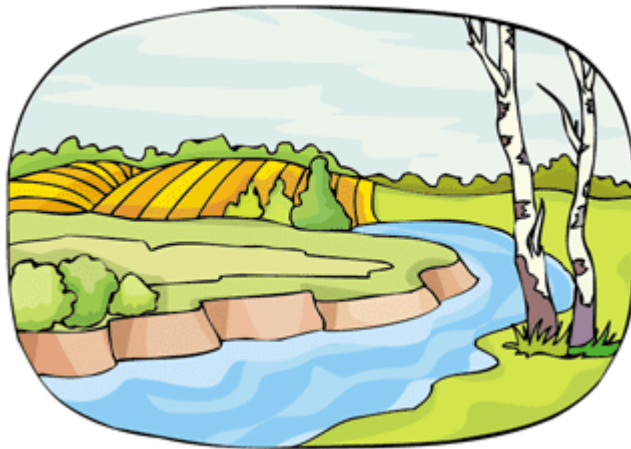


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But there were so many animals, the Jade Emperor could not decide which one should be first.

So, he decided to have a swimming race to help him choose.

The Emperor invited thirteen animals down to the river to take part. He needed to choose twelve animals for his zodiac.





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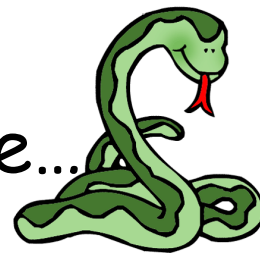
There was...

the tiger...

the snake...



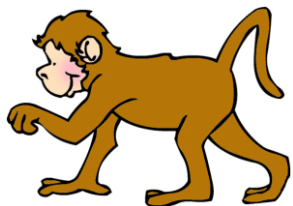
the rat...



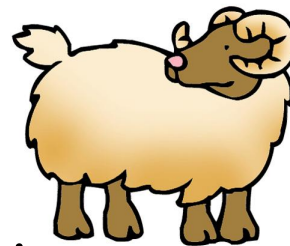
the rabbit...



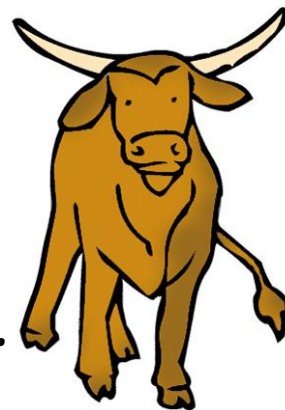
the dog...



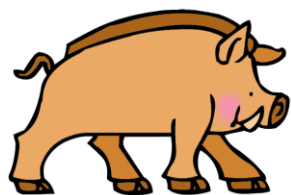
...the monkey



the goat...



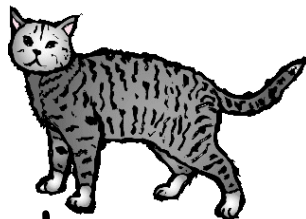
the ox...



the boar...



...the rooster



the cat...



...the horse



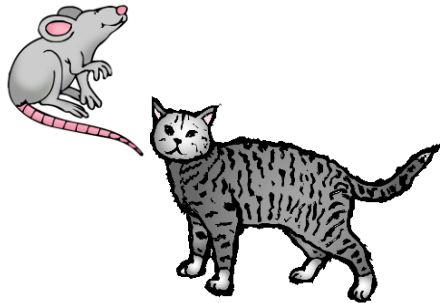
...and the dragon.





The animals lined up for the race.

The Emperor explained that the winner would be the first one to have a year named after it.



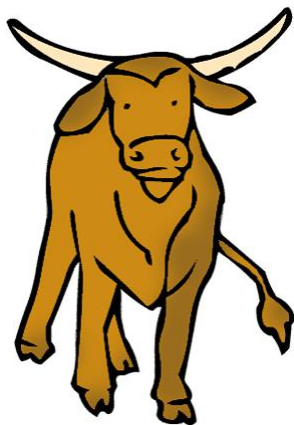
The cat and rat realised that their swimming was not good enough for them to win the race.

So they asked the strong, kindly ox if they could jump on his back.



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The ox was a very kind creature and agreed to help the cat and rat.

The race started and the ox was soon ahead.

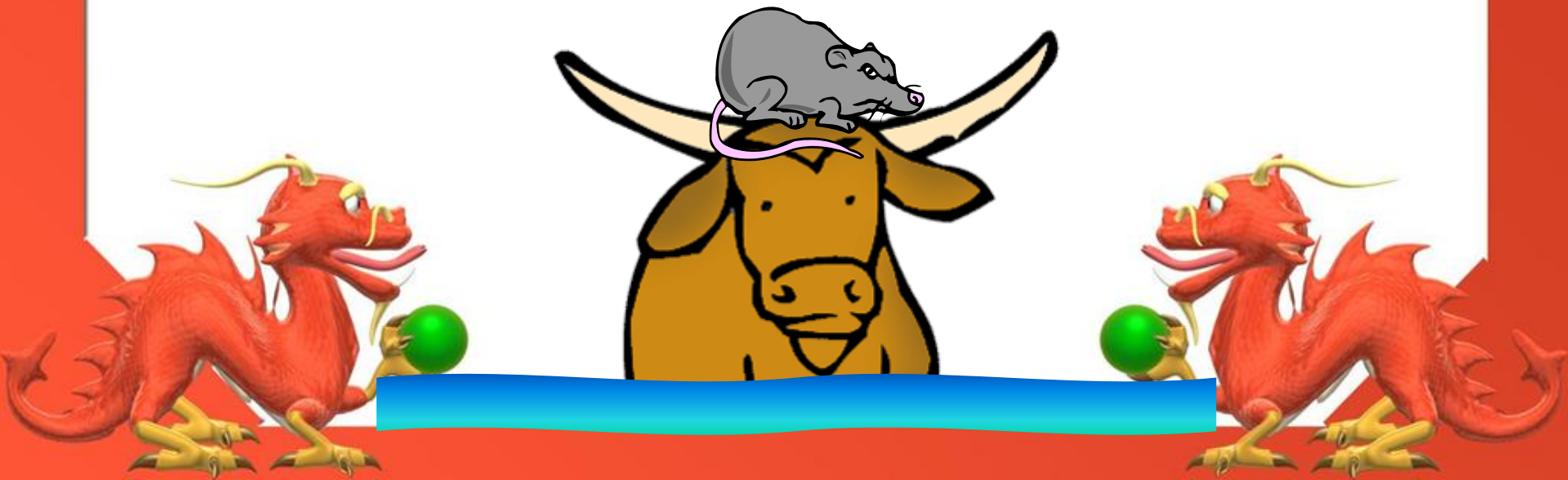
The ox was nearly on the other side of the river when there was a big splash!





The sneaky rat had pushed the cat  
back into the water.

Then, as the ox turned around to look, the  
rat jumped off his back onto the riverbank.  
The rat had won the race and the ox  
finished second.





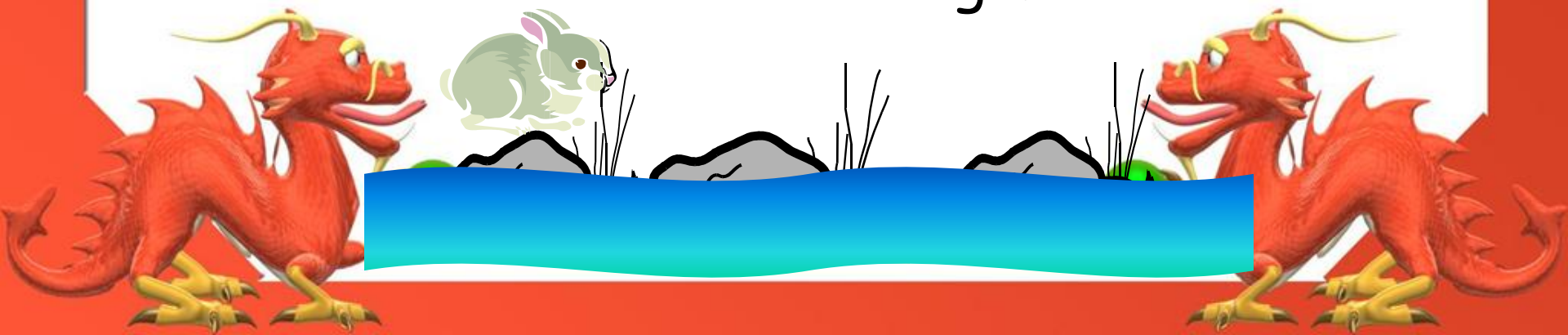
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Next came the tiger and he was  
followed by.....

...the rabbit, who had bounced across  
stones and logs.







The next animal to finish was the mighty dragon.

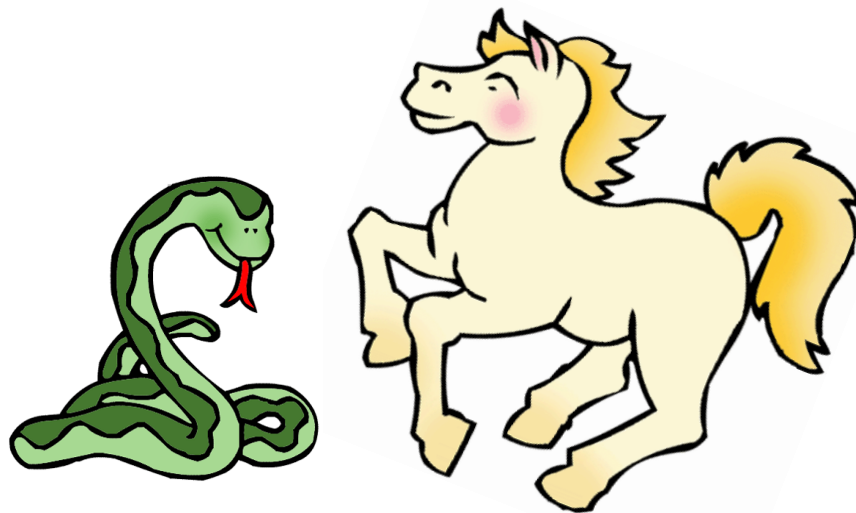
The dragon could easily have come first but he was too busy helping others.



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The snake and the horse came sixth  
and seventh.



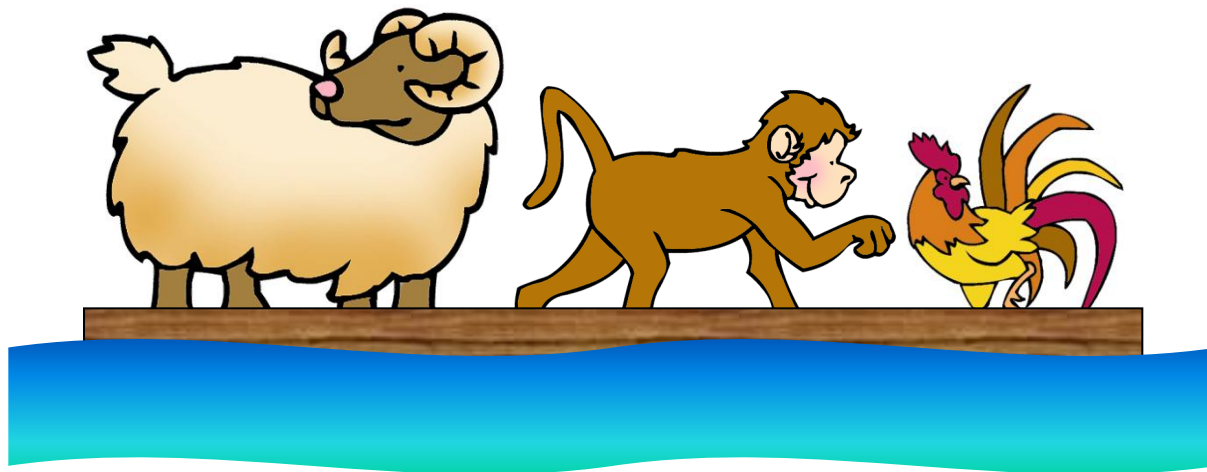
Unfortunately the horse  
had been frightened by the  
snake and the snake had  
managed to sneak ahead.



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Then the Emperor could see a small raft arriving at the riverbank.

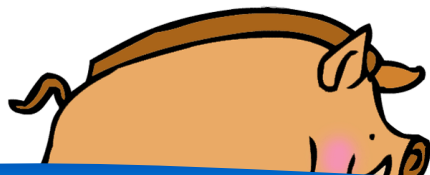


The goat, monkey and rooster had worked as a team.

The Emperor was very pleased.



Just then two more animals  
approached the riverbank.



The dog was one of the best swimmers but had  
taken his time by stopping to have a bath in the  
river's clear water!



The boar had been  
slow because he had  
fallen asleep!

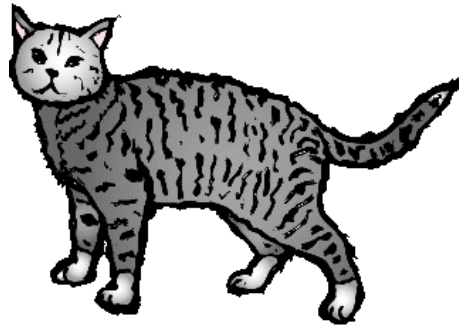




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Although the Emperor now had twelve animals to use on his zodiac, there was still one animal missing.



It was the cat.

The rat had pushed her off the ox with such force that she had ended up a long way from the riverbank.

The cat was very angry and vowed never to be friends with a rat again.



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And that is the story  
of the Chinese  
zodiac.



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